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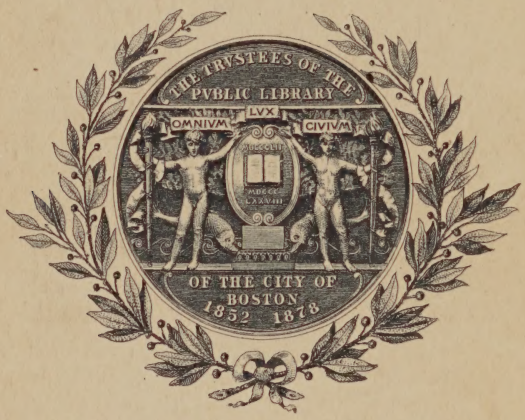

1915

JUN -1 V

A

DISCOURSE,

Delivered in the First Baptist Meeting-House in Boston,

ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1807,

BY JOSEPH CLAY, A.M.

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS

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Installation

TO THE PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

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At a Meeting of the First Baptist Church and Society in Boston, August 23, 1807,—

VOTED, That the Deacons of the Church, and Messrs. PORTER, WILD and LARKIN be a Committee to present the thanks of the Church and Society to the Rev. *JOSEPH CLAY*, for his Sermon preached at the Installation on Wednesday last, and to request a copy thereof for the press.

WILLIAM PORTER, *Moderator.*

DISCOURSE.

75-41, 338

2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 1.

THEREFORE, SEEING WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY, AS WE HAVE RECEIVED MERCY, WE FAINT NOT.

HAVING been applied to by my brethren of this church, to deliver a discourse on the present occasion, in consequence of their disappointment in applications which they had made for this purpose to others, and having been informed by them that my beloved and eminently distinguished predecessor had furnished by his personal example a precedent, though not unconscious of the delicacy of my situation, I did not judge it proper to refuse a compliance with their desire.

The use which I shall endeavour to make of the text which I have selected as the subject of my discourse, will be,

I. To explain the nature and duties of the ministry.

This explanation will necessarily suggest the difficulties, trials, and distresses to which the gospel minister is exposed, and will,

II. Lead me to treat briefly of that mercy of God, which, having received, he is thereby pre-

vented from fainting, from sinking through despondence, from being so discouraged by a view of the greatness of the obstacles which he has to encounter, and of the painful conflicts which he must endure, as to become remiss in the performance of his duty, or to desist from the arduous work which he had undertaken.

I. I shall endeavour to explain the nature and duties of the ministry.

The minister of the gospel is a person called and qualified by God for a sacred service, in which, though he is a worker together with God, he is his servant and the servant of his brethren. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The duties of a minister over a particular charge, may be comprised under the following heads :

1. The preaching of the word or gospel.
2. The administration of ordinances.
3. Watching over his flock.

1. I say, in the preaching of the word or gospel, because, though the gospel in a strict sense does not include the whole word, yet it is not possible to preach the gospel with clearness but in connexion with all revealed truth.

The design of God in the preaching of the word, as in every thing which he does, must be worthy of himself, must be the promotion of his declarative glory. This is directly done by the revelation of himself, or of his character. He is essentially, infinitely, and eternally glorious, the source of all excellence. The exercise of his attributes can only display, but cannot increase, this infinite perfection. He has, however, been pleas-

ed to create a number of intelligent beings, who are capable of comprehending a part of this glory; and to them has he revealed it through different mediums.

Much of his glory is manifested in creation and providence. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." "The Lord our God, who giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season; he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

But it is in his word that God hath given us the most minute, full, and exalted representation of himself. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." Through this medium is God's name, or nature, or attributes, exhibited more intelligibly, with greater brightness, than by any other. Indeed, we cannot form a correct judgment of his works of creation and providence, without the instruction of his word. It is in his word alone that we obtain right ideas of his nature and character. In it are we informed of the mystery of the Trinity, the existence of three co-equal and divine persons in the unity of the Divine Essence. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one." But solely in his divine nature, we cannot approach God in any act of worship, with a just confidence of being accepted. In this view he is not represented

as a God forgiving sin, under which character alone we are authorized to make our approaches unto him. Viewed only as divine, we are under his wrath. We have violated his holy law, to which was annexed the awful sanction of eternal death. We are brought under the curse of this penalty by sin; and our ruined, deplorable state is evidenced by the total depravity of our nature, the enmity of the carnal mind against God. But God is glorified in his word, as a word of salvation to such; salvation through the great mystery of godliness, God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh. It is in the revelation of redemption through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, that his divine attributes are most gloriously illustrated. He is the centre in whom all the lines of truth are represented as meeting; the Sun of righteousness which irradiates the whole word of truth; the essential Word of God, to whom he has given a name above every name; who is the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person, and whose name is the only one given under heaven by which men can be saved.

Here, then, are two important subjects, fully disclosed and frequently discussed in the holy scriptures, which should be the constant topics of a minister's earnest preaching; the guilty, depraved, ruined state of human nature by sin, and its pardon, recovery, and exaltation by Christ Jesus. He should trace this depravity from its source in our first parents, to its influence on our hearts, and its direct and extensively malignant tendency. However mysterious the manner by which guilt and depravity have been derived

from our original ancestors, and a whole race has become polluted by the virulent poison of sin, it is a truth plainly expressed in scripture, of which the world furnishes numerous evidences, and of which the truly penitent have had deep and painful conviction. "For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "In Adam all die." "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint." "Ye who were dead in trespasses and in sins." "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." He should point to the proofs of this truth, with which the world and every human heart teems. He should shew that its tendency is, were it possible, to dethrone the Almighty, to commit deicide, to give all dominion to devils, and to involve the universe in consummate, irretrievable, and everlasting confusion and misery.

In treating of redemption through Christ Jesus, he should take occasion farther to develop the evil of sin, which required so great a sacrifice for its expiation. He should endeavour to shew the freedom, the fulness and riches of grace, in its eternal purpose and perfect consummation. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "By grace are ye saved."

Knowing that no other foundation for salvation can be laid than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus, and having experienced the mercy and love of God in the pardon of his sins, and

the hope of the Spirit through him, he will not introduce his name sparingly nor obscurely. Thus to act, would indicate an appearance of being ashamed of the gospel, of dreading the scoffs of those to whom the wisdom of God, the preaching which he hath prescribed, is foolishness.

But though the ministers of Christ are aware that the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness to the unregenerate, or to such as have a high conceit of themselves; yet being convinced that to those who are called it is the power of God and the wisdom of God, they determine among their flocks to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

They will shew how completely qualified he was to be a Saviour. They will speak with distinctness of his nature, human and divine in one person. Having a spotless soul and body, that he might be capable of suffering in our nature, as our representative; that he might assume the form of a servant, and fulfil a perfect obedience to God's holy law. Being divine, that he might make an infinite atonement for the infinite evil of sin; that he might magnify the law and make it honourable, and bring in an infinite and everlasting righteousness for his people.

They should preach Christ as the Priest, the Prophet, and King of his people, and demonstrate the necessity of his Divinity from the nature of these offices. That as Priest, it was necessary that he should have a suitable offering to give in sacrifice for his people; that, as has been just intimated, it behoved to be one of infinite value; and therefore they are represented as being redeemed not by silver or gold, or such corruptible

things, but by the precious blood of God; his blood, though flowing from a human body, being considered as divine, from its union with Deity in the second person of the Trinity. That his priestly intercession for all his people, under all their trials, made his Divinity necessary. That this was rendered necessary in the discharge of his prophetical office, that he might be able to instruct them all, at all times, however widely dispersed.

Nor could he be King in Zion, have all authority committed to him in heaven and earth, be in heaven while he was on earth, and abide by his Spirit with all his people on earth, and manifest himself to them while his body is in heaven, unless he were omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent. It is necessary that he should be God, to relieve, to comfort them in all their distresses, to turn the hearts of their enemies, to subdue their own corruptions, and to make all events to work together for their good. They will shew with how little confidence a truly sin-sick soul could look for pardon and complete redemption from one called a Saviour, who was not divine; with how little of the tranquil elevation of hope a departing soul could say, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, if he were not truly God. In fine, they will represent him as the alpha and omega, the first and the last; as he who was dead and is alive, and liveth forevermore; who will come a second time, without sin unto salvation; who is the way, the truth and the life, the Christ, the Son of the living God, and God over all, blessed forevermore.

The minister of the gospel will teach men, that none can have just and saving views of Christ, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit. "No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." However accurately men may speak of him, conformably to the scriptures, if they have not experienced that change which is called being born again, born of the Spirit, they can have no saving knowledge of him. "Except a man," says our blessed Lord, "be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "God hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

This being born again, sometimes called the new birth, or regeneration, is no trivial change. It is not a mere external reformation, or the relinquishment of some vicious practices. Such reformation may arise from various causes, and indicate externally extensive amendment, without any moral change being effected in the heart; nay, a self-righteousness may be produced, that is directly opposed to grace. Those who suppose that such reformation constitutes regeneration, are strangers to their own hearts, and to vital religion.

Ministers are sometimes considered to be presumptuous, for expressing themselves explicitly upon some subjects; but they are presumptuous indeed, if they have entered into the ministry without just ground to believe that they have been called to the duty by the Spirit of God. They can have no such ground, unless they have had deep convictions of divine truth. If they have had such convictions, they ought not to speak with hesitancy respecting important princi-

ples. So to speak, is not to act the part of faithful witnesses. There are certain fundamental truths, of which the minister of the gospel should be able to say, with the apostle, "For we know," by that "faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Whether he speaks truth or not, in so asserting, the day of judgment will discover.

It is an almighty energy which is exerted in effecting this change. It is compared to the power put forth in creation, or in giving life. "God," says the apostle Paul, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." It is a change wrought in the whole soul by the Spirit, by which it apprehends, loves, and becomes obedient to the truth, or to the revelation which God has given of himself in the word. By it the understanding is said to be enlightened, so as to be capable of perceiving the truth; the affections to be purified, so as to love it; and the will, in consequence, to become obedient to it. These several acts of the mind are the exercises of that faith by which we receive Christ, love him, and trust in him for all things. This being produced by the Spirit, he is called the Spirit of faith. He convinces of sin, of righteousness, and judgment. He testifies of Christ. He carries on the work of grace in the soul, takes of the things of Christ and shews them, sanctifies and consoles; and thus are be-

lievers not only regenerated, but kept, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

Through this operation of the Spirit are men made believers, by receiving that faith which is the gift of God; and this suggests the two great classes of whom all the hearers of the minister are composed, and to whom he is to have respect in his preaching, believers and unbelievers. Each of these is to be addressed from those two great departments of holy writ, the law and the gospel. We can separate them in idea, but they must be preached in conjunction, that they may be properly known and rightly used. The sinner needs conviction and conversion, the saint instruction and comfort. By the law we learn our guilt; but in the gospel we discover, that "grace and truth," or mercy consistent with justice, "come by Jesus Christ."

Men must be informed, that they are by nature necessarily and justly under the law, and continue so, until they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. I said, necessarily under the law; for laws have been very properly defined to be, in their most general signification, "the necessary relations resulting from the nature of things." This idea is abstract, but it may be rendered intelligible to the plainest capacities. We are related to God as our creator, preserver, benefactor, and of course as our sovereign. God has informed us of this relationship, and of the duties resulting from it, in his holy law. The sum of it is, that we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. The mind properly instructed is sensible of the propriety of loving

supremely, and thence honouring with all our faculties, that Being who is infinite excellence, and who is the author of all our blessings. It is convinced too, that in this God has combined our duty and our interest: for the man who loves him most, and has the clearest evidence of his love in the strictness of his obedience, is the happiest man. And although by sin we have indisposed and disqualified ourselves for love and obedience, so that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," this sinful, wilful opposition cannot diminish our obligation. God is unchangeable; our relation continues; and that law by which our relation and our duty is expressed, must be as unchangeable as those moral perfections of Deity, of which it is a transcript.

Thus must sinners be shewn, that while they reject Christ's righteousness, his perfect obedience to the precepts of that law, and submission to its penalty by him as the surety of believers, and trust for acceptance to their own righteousness, that they are under the curse of a law, which requires constant, perfect obedience. This law, which curses for one sin, has executed the curse of spiritual death on the human race for Adam's sin, in the guilt of which sin men are participants, not only by being represented in him, but by the approbation of that sin, expressed in their own sinful conduct. Thus will they endeavour to use the law lawfully. They will shew that it was added to the promise because of transgression, to drive men from a dependence on themselves, that they might flee to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to

believers. They will shew, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin;" that "the law worketh wrath;" that "the strength of sin is the law;" that "sin, that it might appear sin, worketh death by the law which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful;" that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified;" that "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Thus are men "through the law" instructed that they are "dead to the law, that they might live unto God." Thus is the believer taught that he is "not under the law, but under grace;" not being "without law to God, but under the law to Christ."

Here may be explained the distinction between the law as a covenant of works, or from which sinners vainly expect salvation, and the law as a rule of life. As a covenant of works it hath the penalty of a curse annexed to its violation, and the promise of life to obedience. In this sense the believer is not under the law. Christ has been made a curse for him. Neither does he expect life from his obedience to it. This he is taught is impossible; for, if "there had been a law which could have given life, righteousness would have come by the law." But Christ is made of God unto us righteousness. We do not frustrate the grace of God, and make the death of Christ of none effect. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

But the believer approves the law as a rule of life, considers it as holy, just and good, and delights in it after the inner man. He discovers his state by it; in seeking conformity to it, he seeks to be conformed to God; to be qualified for this purpose, he seeks for grace in Christ, knowing, in some degree, that it is only in him that he is complete. He is made thus to seek by this gracious principle, that spiritual change, that lively faith, which is produced in him, which mortifies sin, distresses him by discovering to him any disagreement between himself and that holy standard; or operating by love, a sense of God's love to him, a consciousness of correspondent affection towards God, enables him to walk with delight in the way of his commandments. Thus we may perceive how necessary it is to preach the law and the gospel in connexion.

In preaching the gospel strictly, the minister of Christ should endeavour to shew how brightly the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines in the face, or person and character of Jesus Christ. Those attributes which are discoverable in creation and providence are here exhibited with more lustre. By no other way have we a satisfactory discovery of the exercise of mercy in the pardon of sin. Here only it is, that we are informed that God can be just, and yet the justifier of sinners; that mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. He should shew the freeness of God's grace in this method of salvation. Christ is given as a

covenant, as a light. He is the unspeakable gift. God gave his Son. Chrift gave himself for us. Faith is the gift of God. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. The Spirit is a free Spirit; cometh freely; is sent; is given; is poured out; is shed abroad. He is the Spirit of promise, the promise of the Father.

The minister of the gospel will vary or suit his addresses to the particular circumstances of saints and sinners. To the careless, the impenitent and open opposers, while he should endeavour to cherish the most tender concern for them, he must represent that vengeance which is revealed against all ungodliness, that eternity of misery which is the doom of those who die in their sins. Unaffected by the opinions of any, he will press upon their minds, with the solemn importance which it deserves, this awful truth; conscious if it can be communicated by language, it is plainly revealed in the holy scriptures. He will remember too, that the most awful denunciations and revelations respecting the eternal world, were made by the meek and lowly Jesus, the compassionate friend of sinners. He will urge the unreasonableness of supposing that any one can be a just judge of the demerit of sin, but that infinite Being, against whose infinite excellence sin is committed.

They who are endeavouring to resist the testimony of the Spirit, who are hardening themselves against the force of truth, should be warned lest they provoke the Almighty to pass upon them the most awful sentence which can be passed on any on this side of eternity, a sentence of judicial hardness, by which the preaching of the gospel will never more have any effect upon them,

but to exasperate their minds and increase their indifference, their aversion, or opposition. They should be informed of the awful words of the prophet and apostle, " Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish ; for I work a work in your day, which *ye shall in no wise believe*, though a man declare it unto you."

Those who have been under temporary convictions, and have recovered their tranquillity without any evidence of a suitable change, should be exhorted and admonished to examine themselves ; they should be informed of the delusive nature of some convictions, though they may be accompanied with much distress. They should be informed that if they are of a salutary tendency, they will produce humility, a renunciation of self, an abhorrence of sin and a departure from it, a love of God and a desire of conformity to him.

To the doubting, desponding, timid and feeble Christian, the minister of the gospel must represent the freedom and fullness of grace in Christ ; that he withholds from none who seek because of their unworthiness ; that those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; that he invites those who labour and are heavy laden to come to him for rest ; that he will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax ; but will gather the lambs in his arms, and gently lead those that are with young. He will inform them that the design of these exercises is, to shew them the evil of their hearts ; their helplessness ; to produce humility in them, and make them more importunate at the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy and grace to help in the time of

need, and give glory to God for those comforting, strengthening and purifying supplies, which he is pleased to impart according to their necessities.

The careless and backsliding Christian he will endeavour to reclaim, by representing to him the love of God in Christ; but he will not omit to inform him that he has no ground to expect that he will be recruited by grace, but in the diligent, earnest use of the means which God hath appointed; that if he continue in a careless, backsliding state, he may dread being surprised into some gross sin, or overtaken by some awful judgment. Though the Lord will not utterly take his loving-kindness from the children of the spiritual David, yet he will visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

He will point out these fundamental truths as disclosed both in the *Old and New Testament*. Some depreciate improperly the former. It is true, that life and immortality are brought to light with more effulgence in the latter; but viewed in connexion, they happily illustrate and confirm each other. In the Old Testament is the Saviour preached in promises, in sacrifices and other types, and in a great variety of prophecies. He is there represented as the angel * that redeemed Jacob; the God that he saw face to face; the angel in whom God put his name, who went before his people, drove out the Canaanites and gave them possession of the promised land, typifying the expulsion of our spiritual enemies, that we might be prepared for the enjoyment of the heavenly Canaan.

* See Gen. xxxii. 24—30. xlviii. 16. Hosea xii. 2—5. Exod. iii. 13—15. Exod. xxiii. 20—28. Mal. iii. 1. Matt. xi. 10. Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 27.

There is he represented as Jehovah and the angel of the covenant.

The manner too in which the law was promulgated was calculated to destroy self-confidence,* and lead to a Mediator. The moral law convicted of sin, the ceremonial pointed out the necessity of a vicarious offering. Does Paul speak of "the wisdom of God in a mystery?" David and the Old Testament saints were acquainted with this "secret of the Lord." Is our blessed Lord and Saviour represented in the New Testament as the mediator of the new covenant, his blood as the blood of the everlasting covenant, and himself as the light of the world? He is represented in the Old as being given as a covenant to the people, and as a light to the Gentiles, and the saints of that dispensation as being interested in "an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, which was all their salvation and all their desire."

In fine, the minister of the word will show how the law, in the Old Testament, leads to and is connected with the gospel; and in the New, how strict a regard to the precepts of the law is required to constitute gospel obedience. He will show how inseparably united God's attributes of mercy and justice are represented to be in each; that the dreadful curse of the law will have a merciful operation upon him, who is persuaded by the terrors of the Lord; but that the precious blood of Christ, which was shed in love and cleanseth from all sin, will call for the sorest vengeance upon

* Observe this expressed in Exod. xix. 8. See the humiliation and fear discovered, and petition made, in chap. xx. 19. God's design intimated in ver. 20. God's approbation of their language, and the promise of a Mediator, in Deut. xvi. 17—19.

those who count it an unholy thing; that when the Lord caused his goodness to pass before Moses, it was as much manifested in denouncing the punishment of the guilty, as in declaring mercy for thousands; and that those who will not come to the meek and lowly Jesus, as the spotless Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, "shall call upon the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, when the great day of his wrath is come."

I shall conclude what I have to say on the subject of preaching with two general remarks.

The first is, that as the mysteries of divine truth are considered as foolishness by the mind not spiritually enlightened, the thought of this may produce unpleasant sensations in the mind of a gospel minister, who wants that composed stability which results from attentive observation, from practice and experience. He may attempt to render these truths more palatable and impressive by his descriptive, or reasoning powers. Let him beware how he relies on the strength of his understanding alone. All truth must be tried by the test of reason. But let him urge the necessity of the mind being spiritually illuminated to be capable of perceiving spiritual truth, about which no judgment can be formed without such perception. In reasoning, let him principally rely on scriptural arguments. God will honour his own word; and the opposer of divine truth, who may have fancied himself triumphant when contending with an adversary who used only human weapons, may, through the agency of the Spirit, be prostrated by a "Thus it is written."

The other remark is, that though in the style or language of preaching some variety may be innocently and even usefully indulged, yet it should be remembered that the majority of hearers are not learned ; that it should be perspicuous and plain, that it may be intelligible to all classes of an audience.

2. In the administration of the ordinances he will adhere closely to the examples set in the New Testament. From thence will he explain their signification and design ; and while he urges an attentive perusal of the scriptures, and sincere addresses at the throne of grace for instruction in the knowledge and right use of them, he will cultivate a Christian fellowship with, and endeavour to guard himself and others from prejudices against, those who may have so used these means, and have drawn conclusions different from his own.

3. He is to watch over his flock.

This duty, though in many particulars distinct from the preaching of the word, has, in some respects, a close connexion with it. By his attention to his flock, he will obtain such a knowledge as will afford him direction, in his public ministrations and private exercises. He will know what petitions to present in their behalf at the throne of grace. He will know what doctrines require most to be pressed, and what errors to be exposed at particular seasons. And though all the promises are the Christian's treasure, spiritual food, and mean of purification, he will perceive that in the peculiar state of his flock, or of some of them, he may dilate with more prospect of advantage upon some of these at certain periods

than upon others. The same remark will apply equally to the different topics of reproof, admonition, exhortation and consolation. He will in the performance of these duties, instruct with plainness; reprove and admonish with meekness, firmness, and tenderness; exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine, and comfort with that consolation wherewith he himself has been comforted. He will, as much as the urgency of his private studies, and other duties will permit, visit at their houses, the different members of his flock, to explain and enforce his public ministrations, in the various particulars just recited; especially will he visit the sick and the dying, the tempted and the afflicted, and warn, instruct and comfort them, according to their several circumstances.

A very important branch of the duty of watching over a flock consists in presiding in the church as a body for discipline. Here does he, in a particular manner, need guidance from on high, that he may be watchful over his own spirit; that he may restrain, advise and regulate, agreeably to the scripture rules, with a Christian temper. Though he will unavoidably and properly love most, where he thinks he sees most of the image of God, yet in the performance of this duty, he must have no Joseph, but endeavour to conduct himself with the most exact impartiality.

The minister of the gospel, to be successful in the performance of these duties, should lead an holy life. He cannot otherwise expect, nor indeed, from proper motives, desire, the blessing of God upon his labours. A truly pious man commands the respect of unbelievers. But an ungodly minister, for such paradoxical language we must

use, furnishes a pretext for questioning the reality of religion, affords a shelter for the irreligious, is a stumbling-block to some Christians, and a ground of offence to all. The situation of those who are pious, and are striving in the strength of the Lord to live near to him, and to fulfil every duty, is deeply interesting and trying. They are indeed as cities on a hill. Their most minute actions are scanned. Indiscretions, which in other Christians would pass unobserved, are rigorously noted. Too many of the world are pleased at discovering in them whatever may be the occasion of reproach to them, or to the cause which they appear to have espoused. They are targets, at whom Satan is most disposed to cast his fiery darts; and upon them, as far as he is permitted, does he exercise his most subtle policy, and virulent malice. Earnestly need they to pray, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path because of mine enemies," or, as it might be translated, "because of mine observers," and that he would enable them to avoid even the appearance of evil. Well may they rejoice that he has overcome the world; that he intercedes, when Satan desires to sift them as wheat, that their faith should not fail, and that the God of peace will soon bruise him under their feet. Frequent and earnest should they be at the throne of grace to render thanks for grace received, and to implore for grace to qualify them for every good word and work.

Under even this imperfect view of ministerial duties and trials, we are led to exclaim with the apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and to confess that our sufficiency is only of God.

II. To illustrate this, we are led to a consideration of the second clause of our text, or branch of the subject—"having received mercy, we faint not," sink not into despondence, into culpable remissness, or desist from our honourable but arduous undertaking.

It would be reasonable to infer from these words, if we were not experimentally acquainted with their import, that the minister of the gospel has trials and burdens, which often greatly oppress and seem almost sufficient to overwhelm him. Indeed, a sense of their own infirmities and unworthiness, of the difficulties they must encounter, and the peculiar conflicts which they undergo, generally disposes the servants of God to shrink from the office of the ministry, even when they feel some drawings or influences of the Spirit inclining them to it, or impressing on their minds an engagement in it as their duty. We recollect how long Moses objected or argued against delivering God's message to Pharaoh and the Israelites. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt? I am not eloquent; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Jeremiah would have excused himself by saying, "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." Isaiah, just before he went to deliver to Israel the Lord's message, exclaimed, "Wo is me! for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." But notwithstanding all their trials, though they often give proofs of human infirmity, yet, receiving mercy, they faint not.

By "receiving mercy," is generally considered to be here intended the mercy of God in distinguishing them by calling them to the ministry, and supporting and honouring them in it. This is, perhaps, what is primarily designed, but does not, I presume, include every idea which may be comprehended within the expression. The call to the ministry is indeed a striking evidence of God's merciful, distinguishing grace. However lowly, or unworthy the regard of the world, the office of a minister of the gospel may appear, yet it is, though the most humbling, the most awfully exalted station in which a human being can be placed. He is called by Jehovah to be his servant and messenger, to declare the most deeply interesting truths to the children of men; and he is authorized to say to them that the great I AM hath sent him. Wo is him if he cry peace, peace, when there is no peace; and wo is him if he preach not the gospel; but, executing his office with fidelity, God will give him seals, testimonials to authenticate his commission, to demonstrate his appointment, however poorly qualified he may appear to have been in the judgment of men for his sacred charge.

How unexpectedly by themselves and others did Christ call Matthew the publican, Peter, and three other fishermen at once, and the persecuting Saul. Paul informs us, that this was one of God's designs in calling him by his grace and revealing his Son in him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles. Reasonable evidence of being thus mercifully called, for this merciful

purpose, affords great support to a minister under his severe trials. When he reflects upon the value of his own immortal soul, the dreadful precipice upon which he stood, the free mercy of God in the pardon of his sins, and that he is called to be an instrument of communicating so infinite a blessing to others, he is animated in the service of his Lord, fired with zeal for his glory, and ardently desirous that God may be glorified in the eternal happiness of his fellow-men. He has, indeed, his periods of deep depression, when he appears to walk in thick darkness; when the avenues of divine truth seem closed, and he engages in duty hopeless and heartless; but he recollects that Paul may plant and Apollos water, it is God who giveth the increase. He is conscious that should an angel from heaven preach the gospel, with all possible clearness and pathos, unless his preaching were accompanied with the divine blessing, his words would flow from him as useless sounds, however alarming or pleasing to the sense. To convict, to convert, to instruct, to comfort, is the prerogative of God. The Lord can do this by a sentence which he may utter, with a heart wholly, or seemingly unaffected.

Thus is he sensible, that the strength of God is made perfect in his weakness. He remembers that when Paul felt himself among the Corinthians to be in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, that then he spoke not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Under these views and recollections of the mercy of God, he is supported, nay, sometimes comforted and animated by similar experience, discovering that

some of his most comfortless, and to him unpromising exercises, have been particularly blessed.

Again does he appear to be pressed without measure and above strength. He is sensible of a barrenness of spiritual ideas, and an almost, if not entire privation of spiritual sensation. He feels the distressing, irritating, enfeebling power of corruption. He is assailed by peculiar and complicated trials. All Satan's devices seem to be employed to entangle, to stop, to overwhelm him in his course. How can he now go forth as the messenger of God, to declare those truths, the power and savour of which seem at this awful period to have fled from his soul. He dare not, he cannot abandon his post; but how does he desire that the Lord would grant him a respite, that he would permit him, and open a door for him, to retire for a time from the intercourse of men. But the Lord designs to deliver him in another manner. He must see and know his great salvation. He must be emptied of his ensnaring self-sufficiency, and give all glory to God. In anguish of soul he cries out, Lord, save me. He wrestles for deliverance and a blessing, and the Lord delivereth, the Lord sheweth mercy. Then he sees plainly, that however grievous his temptations were for the time, they bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Thus he discovers, with increasing clearness, "that in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwelleth no good thing;" that what he is, he is by the grace of God. Thus does he discover more fully the plagues of his own heart, and the subtle wiles of the adversary of souls; and thus is he brought more confidently to trust and rejoice in and give

all glory to that grace which alone is sufficient for him, and through that grace to rely on the promise, "Lo! I am with you to the end of the world."

Such exercises are probably most frequent in the commencement of the ministerial life; but whatever is the sphere of usefulness for which God at any time designs a minister, he will prepare him by conducting him through such scenes as will qualify him by suitable experience; such as will convince him of his insufficiency, of that pride which is a copious source of his painful feelings, and of the gracious sovereignty of God. These views of truth, impressed by the Holy Spirit, will lead him to preach the gospel in simplicity, "not to handle the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestion of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." They will be profitable to his own soul; as they will enable him to probe the hearts of others, to disclose their depravity and the deceitfulness of sin, to detect the artifices of Satan, and to foster the spark of grace in disconsolate believers.

Thus have I endeavoured to sketch the outline of ministerial duty, to suggest some of the difficulties and trials of that office, and to mention some of the principal grounds or means from which the supports and comforts of a minister are derived.

As we cannot consider a pastor or minister rightly, but in connexion with the flock or people to whom he ministers, it will be proper on such an occasion that I should say something of their duty. Their relation has been compared

to the conjugal one, and though the analogy has been too far stretched to authorize unscriptural inferences, they are mutually bound to comfort, to cherish, and to promote each other's greatest good. The people should make suitable provision for their minister, that he may not be constrained to consume any portion of that time in attention to temporal concerns, which should be devoted to the peculiar duties of his station. I am led to make this observation, not as being necessary to the immediate attention of those whom I particularly address, whose liberality I have an opportunity to commend; but because it is an important duty, and ought not to be omitted in such an enumeration, and because I have known churches and societies to be criminally negligent in this particular. Though God will accomplish his purposes, however much opposed or remiss men may be, yet their neglect is not the less reprehensible. Inattention to this duty appears to be a species of spiritual suicide, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, as it has a tendency to prevent our receiving that spiritual nourishment, which is necessary for the support and increase of the divine life. Some are negligent in the performance of this duty, from not using due consideration; others are restrained by that contracting, criminal covetousness, which the apostle Paul has emphatically declared to be idolatry.

Another important duty of a people is to strengthen the hands of their minister, as those of Moses were upheld by Aaron and Hur. The apostle whom I have just mentioned, entreats the churches to pray that he might be suitably qualified for his office; and the various exhortations

to the performance of this duty, and instances of its being blessed, afford ample demonstration of its importance and efficacy.

I am happy, my brethren and friends, in the belief, that I am connected with a praying people. Your late beloved pastor, in one of his last letters to me, mentioned how much he was strengthened in performing his ministerial labours, and assigned as a principal mean, through which this effect was produced, the prayers of his people. I hope and beseech that they will constantly be presented on my behalf, for your sakes and for mine, for the sake of Zion, to the praise of the glory of the grace of God.

You have, my brethren and friends, been for many years greatly blessed in a pastor richly endowed with the best gifts and graces, and honoured by distinguished usefulness. I have hitherto been sparing in my observations respecting him. I have been so, because I have had reason to conclude, that since his death his merit has been the frequent theme of those, who were more able to do justice to it; because I feared that in the breasts of some I might unnecessarily renew the anguish of grief; and because I feared that I might be thought to be desirous of exciting an interest in your minds by the introduction of so tender a subject, which I might not have been able to produce in the use of those important topics to which I have generally endeavoured to lead your minds. But I may be excuseable, from one consideration, in making a few remarks respecting him at this time.

With the name of your beloved Dr. STILLMAN, you have long been accustomed to associate all

that was benevolent, amiable, and endearing as a man; the most fervent piety, distinguished talents, and eminent usefulness as a minister. You remember with what anxious concern, with what strong emotion you hung upon his lips, when he described, in deeply interesting colours, the depravity of human nature, the ruined, the helpless state of man; how your bosoms burned within you, when in raptures he described the wonders of redeeming love. You recollect how your minds were enlightened by his parental instructions, how your sorrows were soothed by his experienced addresses, and your souls fed while he expatiated upon the promises of the gospel. Often have you witnessed the cheering effects of his conversation, deeply imbued with the savour of the gospel, with the spirit of his Lord, in the common circles of life. You have seen and heard him with interesting sensations, in his visits to the tried and the afflicted, the sick, the languishing, and the dying. You have heard his faithful and affectionate cautions and instructions. Under his consolations you have seen the drooping revived, the afflicted and mourning comforted, and the dying strengthened for a triumph over death and the grave. You have witnessed the wonderful facility, and the degree of perfectness, with which he filled the whole circle of ministerial duty.

The ideas of him, and of me his successor, will often meet in your mind. I would pray that when they do, you would entreat the Lord to make you grateful for having so long continued him in this town; that you would cherish the remembrance of his excellence for your imitation, and to strengthen the joy of your hope of meet-

ing him hereafter; that you would remember how recently I have come into the ministry; the circumstances, the embarrassments under which I entered into it; my little experience in the pastoral duties, and the important charge which I have undertaken; that you will pray the Lord to enable me to follow him as he followed Christ; and that while you hope that I will strive, and I promise with the assistance of God to endeavour, to attain to his ripened excellence, you will continue to me that brotherly indulgence which I am sure you have hitherto exercised, and make suitable allowances for me, if, while aiming to be qualified for all duties, I should bestow most attention to those which are most important, and should appear for a time to be deficient in any.

I beseech you also, my brethren and friends, not only to be earnest in prayer for yourselves, but diligent in searching the scriptures. Do not expect to get your instruction solely from your pastor; if you do, you will be disappointed. God is a jealous God. Whatever allowances will be made for the illiterate, or those who from various causes can but seldom have recourse to the scriptures, those who have opportunity must expect barrenness to accompany negligence.

I conclude, my brethren, by assuring you, that I feel thankful to the Lord for having disposed you to call me to the pastoral office, and for having made the path of duty so clear to myself. I feel not the least interfering attraction to any other quarter or station. Here, if it shall appear to be the will of the Lord, am I disposed to lay my bones. But should the period ever arrive when I shall be led to say that I expect to see your face

no more, either from the clear directions of God's providence while I am capable of usefulness in life, or when he shall summon my spirit to himself, I pray that I may be enabled to say, "I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And when the Lord shall remove us from time to eternity, may affectionate friends, to whom we have been long and intimately known, be enabled with equal propriety to apply to us, as was applied by his reverend brother to our pastor, the words of the apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

And, my brethren, until the Lord shall remove us, let us continue to wrestle at the throne of grace, that our children may supply our places in the church; and O pray with me, that your children may become my children; that the Lord would honour me in making me their spiritual father; that the labours of us all in the Lord in their behalf being crowned with success by him, we may say, in glory, Here are we and the children thou hast given us.

CHARGE.

BY JOSEPH GRAFTON, A. M.

THE gospel ministry is an institution of heaven; and is in its nature *sacred*, *solemn*, and *important*. The declarative glory of God, the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, the edification and comfort of God's people, and the everlasting salvation of sinners, form its basis, and are objects immediately connected therewith. It is not only customary, but appropriate and scriptural, that when a person is entering into the office of the ministry, or taking the charge of souls upon him, that he be enjoined to faithfulness and fidelity in the discharge of his duty.

This part of the service, on this occasion, being by the council convened assigned me, I rise, my dear sir, to address you; not with the authority of Paul the aged, but with great deference, and with the affection and equality of a brother.

You, the Rev. JOSEPH CLAY, having consented to take the pastoral charge of this church and congregation, and now in this public manner recognized your acceptance,—"I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou take heed unto the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." "The holy scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God," the minister of the gospel, "may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." You will make them the man of your counsel. Draw every stream of your doctrine from this uncontaminated source of divine and evangelic truth. "To the law and to the testimony" you will often advert, as your vouchers. Teach not for doctrines the commandments, the traditions, or opinions of men.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season." "Shun not to declare all the counsel of God."

In preaching the word, you will often bring into view the existence and perfections of the great Jehovah; these lay at the root of all real religion, whether natural or revealed. You will represent the Most High as underived and eternal in his existence; as omniscient and omni-

present; as the sovereign of heaven and earth, infinite in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy, and truth; that his laws are equitable, and his government perfect.

In preaching the word, you will represent the moral law as *holy*, *just*, and *good*; that in its nature it is spiritual and eternal; that from the nature and fitness of things, all intelligencies are under obligation to love the Lord with all their hearts; and that the penalty annexed to the violation thereof, is eternal death, and that justly.

In preaching the word, you will insist upon the depravity and guilt of man. These were the occasion of the stupendous scheme of mercy. Had man remained innocent, there would have been no necessity for the intervention of the Lord Jesus. Moral depravity consists not only in the privation of that righteousness with which man was at first adorned; but in a fixed opposition of heart to God, to holiness, and to the law and government of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be."

In declaring all the counsel of God, you will "preach Jesus Christ and him crucified." O glorious theme! O unsearchable riches of grace! You will represent him as God manifest in the flesh. You will insist upon his vicarious sufferings, and complete atonement for sin. Leaving these out of the scheme of redemption, the gospel is reduced to a cold system of morality, and many parts of the Bible are rendered unintelligible and contradictory.

In preaching the word, you will insist upon the deity, personality, and influence of the Holy Ghost. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." It is by the agency of the Divine Spirit, co-operating with the preached word, the ordinances of the gospel, and the providence of God, that the mind of man is enlightened, his heart renewed, and he prepared for heaven.

In preaching the word, you will point out to your hearers the nature and necessity of regeneration. The tree must first be made good, before the fruit can be good also. The declaration was made by our divine Master, the word is gone out of his mouth, it cannot return void, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

You will inculcate upon those who believe, the necessity of maintaining good works, the importance of practical religion; and that salvation by faith in Christ doth not make void the law of God—no: God forbid.

You are not only to preach the word, but you are to take the oversight of this church. "You are to watch for souls, as one who is to give account." "Take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Hear the interrogation of our divine Lord to Peter; "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter answered, "Yea, Lord." "Feed my lambs; feed my sheep." You will, sir, as far as in your power, know the state of your church. You will not "lord it over God's heritage, but be an ensample to the flock."

It will be your endeavour to comfort them who mourn in Zion; to pity and pray for the tempted; to instruct the ignorant, and those who are out of the way; to point the inquiring and anxious sinner to the Lamb of God. You will confirm the doubting, and strengthen the hands that hang down; give milk to babes, and strong meat to men.

In presiding over the church, you will administer discipline without partiality, not preferring one before another; "saving some with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

In administering the special ordinances of the gospel, you will view the example and adhere to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the practice of his apostles.

In guarding the door of entrance into the church, you will be careful not to admit any who do not give evidence that they have experienced religion, who have not passed from death to life.

When called to assist in ordaining a brother, regard the advice of Paul to Timothy; "Lay hands suddenly on no man. Commit these things to faithful men, who are able to teach others also."

Candour and catholicism are tempers much to be cultivated, in all your conduct and intercourse with Christians differing in sentiment from you. A censorious, a bigoted spirit, you will never indulge; yet you cannot dispense with what you believe to be truth, or duty, to gratify their feelings, or to accommodate yourself to their opinions.

Here you are a stranger. It may be observed, in honour to the inhabitants of this metropolis, that they are noted for their candour, and attention to strangers. I have no doubt but you will find a friend and brother in every minister in this town, who loves our Lord Jesus Christ.

My brethren of this church and congregation, it is with a mixture of pleasure and of pain, that we congratulate you on this occasion. We know how solicitous your late venerable and dear pastor was, that you might obtain an assistant to him, as well as a successor. He was in part gratified in seeing this generous wish of his heart accomplished. He was agreed with you, in calling your pastor elect. He was pleased in the prospect of his settling among you. No doubt he anticipated, with much satisfaction, the solemnities of this day ;—

> But sudden death thrust his dread shears between,
> Cut off his life, and thus clos'd up the scene.

It is very probable, had he been continued, he would have addressed you at this time, and perhaps in language not dissimilar to the following :—'My brethren and friends, the desire of my heart is granted. I have wished to live to see my successor settled among you, before my departure. I am happy. I beg, my brethren, your attention one moment ; permit me to give you my dying charge :—*Behold the man!* the man whom you have called to be your pastor ; the man who has come at our united request ; who has left his former associates, and religious connexions ; who is cheerfully devoting his time, his strength, and his talents in your service ; who is willing to spend and be spent for your spiritual and eternal good. It was not worldly honour, it was no pecuniary consideration, that brought him here ; no, but a sense of duty. My brethren, honour him, love him, pray for him ; strengthen his hands and encourage his heart, in the work of the Lord. May you long enjoy and improve under his ministry. See, my dear, dear friends, that after my decease, you fall not out by the way. And may we, who have so often met within these walls, and united in the pleasing, solemn, social duties of religion, meet in that house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Adieu, my friends ; I bid you an affectionate farewell!'

And now, dear sir, may you obtain grace that you may be found faithful unto death ; that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, he may place upon your head a crown of glory, bespangled with stars, emblematical of the many souls you have turned to righteousness. Grant it, heavenly Father, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY THOMAS BALDWIN, D. D.

CHRISTIANITY, viewed in every possible light, must appear infinitely superior to all other religions. Its doctrines are pure and sublime, and its precepts rational and salutary. If considered as a mere system of ethics, it as far exceeds all human systems, as the splendour of day exceeds the feeble rays of the lunar orb. But what renders Christianity still more interesting to man, is, that it inspires the soul with the most permanent and exalted hopes of future immortality and bliss. It not only teaches us what we must be, in order to be happy; but by its transforming influence upon the heart, produces in us a temper and disposition corresponding to the felicity and glory of the heavenly state.

This temper essentially consists in holy love, or right affection of heart. It is this which forms our greatest likeness to the Deity: for "God is love." It is this which distinguishes the true disciples of Christ from all others; for love is the moving spring of all acceptable obedience. It is this love which unites and cements all the redeemed millions in heaven and in earth, in one bond of indissoluble union.

This true Christian affection is not a vague, licentious passion; but a pure, heavenly flame, kindled up in the soul by the Spirit of God; and though it sometimes appears less fervid, it is always sincere and constant. It cannot rejoice in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. Hence it is that all good men have fellowship in the truth. For the love we bear to our Christian brethren, if genuine, must be principally for the truth's sake that dwelleth in them.

In order to our loving one another in the truth, we must have mutual satisfactory evidence of each other, that we are in the truth. This evidence arises from a reciprocation of feeling, experience, sentiment, and practice. In exact proportion to our agreement in these particulars, will our fellowship be with each other.

The beloved John, as if intending to amplify this sentiment, thus addressed his brethren: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have *fellowship* with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." We must

have the evidence of the Christianity of others, that they have been *born from above*, and have *been made to drink into the same Spirit*, in order to have fellowship with them in the gospel. Without this, there can be nothing deserving the name. If righteousness and unrighteousness can have fellowship with each other, or if light and darkness can join in communion; then may we conclude, that he that *believeth* may take part or have fellowship with an unbeliever.

The apostles, though acting under a divine commission, were nevertheless careful to act in fellowship with each other. Hence, with a view to refute the suggestions of false teachers against his person and doctrine, St. Paul, when vindicating himself to the churches of Galatia, declared, that he did not act as a solitary individual, but in full fellowship and agreement with his brethren: for, saith he, "when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and to Barnabas the *right hands of fellowship*."

In imitation of this apostolic practice, it has been usual, on occasions like the present, to give to the person inducted or installed in the sacred office, the right hand of fellowship. This pleasing part of the present solemnity has been assigned to me.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The brethren composing this council, being fully satisfied with respect to your experimental acquaintance with the truth, the purity of your Christian character, the sincerity of your motives for entering into the work, and the regular manner in which you have been introduced to this flock of our Lord, have requested me in their behalf to express to you the fellowship of the churches.

With the cordial feeling of a friend and Christian brother, I now, dear sir, present you my *right hand*. Accept it as a sincere token of our brotherly love, and as a pledge of our future friendship. By this significant rite, we do, in the presence of God, and before this solemn, witnessing assembly, express our fellowship with you as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Particularly in our mutual experience of the saving power of the gospel, and of its precious consolations and promises; and also of our agreement with you in all its important doctrines and institutions.

By this public act, we engage you our advice and assistance at all times, as occasion may require; expecting, in return, the same kind offices from you.

You are called, dear sir, to succeed a *brother, whose praise was in all the churches.* One who occupied a wide space in the public esteem, and whose memory will ever be dear to our hearts. We devoutly wish you a double portion of that Spirit which qualified him for such eminent usefulness in the church of God; that you may see this large and respectable church, now committed to your care, prospering under your ministrations; and that you may have many, very many of those who hear you, from time to time, given you as the seals of your ministry, and to be as stars in your future crown of rejoicing.

It is in my heart, my brother, to say to you, as Joab did to his brother Abishai, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee." "Be of good courage," my brother, "and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God; and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight."

This church and congregation will receive our sincere congratulations, on the present joyful occasion.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,

Lately were we called to sympathize with you, under the afflictive stroke of Divine Providence, in the removal of your beloved pastor. Painful as this event was, in itself considered, it received some mitigation from the circumstance of your having a successor in prospect. Your hopes have not been disappointed. God has given you the pastor of your choice. Your eyes this day behold the man! Receive him, brethren, as an ascension gift, and esteem him highly in love for his works' sake.

May gratitude, my beloved brethren, constrain you, on this occasion, to offer praise and thanksgiving to him, who is styled the *Healer of Breaches;* whose goodness has watched over you under all your trials, and not suffered you to be scattered like sheep upon the mountains without a shepherd. He that gathered these lambs with his arm, hath hitherto condescended to carry them in his bosom. May Heaven grant, that that union which now so happily subsists among you, and especially betwixt you and your dear pastor, may continue with increasing pleasure and advantage, until *death* shall receive the royal mandate to remove him from you to the church triumphant. There may you meet, not only each other, but all the ransomed millions, never more to part. Which may God grant, for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.